

Responsive Teaching Strategies

Responsive teaching strategies are parent responses that support your child’s current development and skills or help him/her learn and use new skills. In the sequence of parent and child interactions, responsive teaching strategies are used when the child is in an awake and calm state and after the parent engages the child’s attention and interests. Review these strategies with your practitioner and choose daily activities to identify what you are currently using or identify new strategies you wish to try to support your child’s learning.

- ☐ Start play with your child by doing the same thing he/she is doing.
- ☐ Take turns making noises or faces or gesturing with your child.
- ☐ Move objects your child is looking at or reaching for closer to his/her hands.
- ☐ Help your child try new things with people and objects.
- ☐ Do what your child is interested in during activities.
- ☐ Wait for your child to smile or do something back to you after you do something to practice taking turns.
- ☐ Find ways to make play activities your child likes to last longer.
- ☐ Use your child’s interests and skills to include him/her in family activities.
- ☐ Introduce new play objects or activities when your child is in an alert, calm state.
- ☐ Increase how often your child plays and/or interacts successfully with others.
- ☐ Consistently follow your child’s activity and communication routines.
- ☐ Show your child new ways to do things.
- ☐ Immediately copy what your child does with people and objects.
- ☐ Other _____



*My Child Practitioner and Parent
Responsive Strategies Guide*

Identifying Information

Childs Name:	Date of Birth:
Parent/Caregiver:	Practitioner:

Parents are more knowledgeable and important than anyone else in their child’s life. Parents know what abilities their child has to interact with people and objects, what times of day he/she likes to play, eat, and sleep, and what calms and comforts him/her. Parents also know the daily activities and routines of their child’s life and the best times to introduce new people, go new places, and practice new skills.

Responsive interactions between you and your child help him/her learn during everyday routines. When parents are responsive they have more successful communications with their child. Successful communication between you and your child includes four steps:

1. You identify what your child wants or does not want to do in any given activity.
2. You let your child know that you understood his/her intentions or needs.
3. You respond to your child regarding his/her interests or needs in an activity.
4. Your child lets you know if your response was successful or helpful for him/her

Using responsive strategies, parents help their child learn successful ways to communicate, learn new things, interact and play with others, and participate in family activities. This guide lists three different kinds of responsive strategies that parents use to invite, engage, and teach children during everyday activities.

Practitioners should use this guide with the *My Child Interest and Activity Plan* to help parents identify the responsive strategies they currently use and/or want to use to invite, engage, and teach their child during everyday activities. Practitioners and parents should plan how parents will practice and evaluate what strategies work best during everyday activities for their child and family

Emotional Direction

All child behaviors express an interest to be part of an activity, to quit an activity, or have a need met. Children with multiple motor, sensory, and cognitive challenges often have unique behaviors that signal their interests and needs that may take different information and/or practice to recognize. Being an Emotional Director for your child helps you recognize his/her cues to use responsive strategies that invite him/her to participate in activities and support his/her ability to play, calm down, and rest during daily activities. Listed below are behaviors related to child states and emotional signals. Review these child emotional and communication actions across a daily activity to identify how your child is signaling interests, readiness to participate, or a need to rest.

“I want to play,” calm, alert, and/or focused states

- Facial Movements: ☐ Eyes open or widen and/or eyebrows raised looking towards people and objects
☐ Maintaining eye contact, mouth opening and closing, smiling and/or grinning
- Physical Movements: ☐ Startles, twitches, arms waving, hands opening and closing, legs kicking, lifting and/or turning my head towards people or objects.
☐ Relaxed posture and steady breathing rates
- Vocalizations: ☐ Pleasant coos, laughter, and /or grunting not indicating distress
☐ Humming or pleasant sighing

What keeps me awake and playful?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking in a calm or playful voice | <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle touching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping me to sit up or changing positions | <input type="checkbox"/> Holding my caregiver’s finger or a toy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sucking on my hand or pacifier | <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle bouncing |

“I want to eat or rest or sleep,” fussy, agitated, dazed, or tuned out

- Facial Movements: ☐ Eyes shut and eyebrows together
☐ Frowns, grimaces, and/or mouth closed tightly
- Physical Movements: ☐ Agitated or restless movement of hands, legs, unresponsive to touch or sound and turning head or body away people or objects
☐ Startles, sneezes, or yawns, or rapid breathing
- Vocalizations: ☐ Crying or whining
☐ Unpleasant cooing, sighing, or grunting indicating distress

What helps me to calm down or sleep?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking in a calm or quiet voice | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holding or cuddling | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet humming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sucking on my hand or pacifier | <input type="checkbox"/> Rocking |

Responsive Parenting Strategies

Responsive parenting strategies are all the positive ways parents engage and respond immediately to their child. Contingent responsive parenting strategies let your child know immediately that you heard and understood what he/she communicated. Responsive parenting strategies also include learning about your child’s interests, skills, and what helps him/her be successful. These strategies help your child to listen to you so you can use responsive teaching strategies to help him/her learn about people, objects, activities, and/or emotions. Review these strategies with your practitioner, then choose daily activities to identify strategies you are currently using or new strategies you wish to try.

- ☐ Listen to and look at your child when he/she looks at you and until you know what he/she wants or is interested in.
- ☐ Let your child know that you see he/she is ready to play or do things with you.
- ☐ Look at and name what your child likes to do in an activity.
- ☐ Let your child know you accept and understand what he/she is feeling and telling you.
- ☐ Always respond immediately and positively to your child.
- ☐ Note how your child responds back to you to make sure he/she understands you.
- ☐ Understand how your child tells you he/she likes something or wants to play more.
- ☐ Let your child know when he/she has been successful doing things with you and others.
- ☐ Know how your child tells you he/she needs to eat, sleep or to change something.
- ☐ Comfort your child when he/she is upset.
- ☐ Talk to your child prior to touching or moving him/her.
- ☐ Talk about what you are doing with your child.
- ☐ Know how your child responds to different touches, lights, and/or noises.
- ☐ Identify what your child can do to participate in all family routines.
- ☐ Other _____

